The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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ABSENCE.

What shall I do with all the days and hours
That must be counted ere I see thy face?
How shall I charm the interval that lowers
Between this time and that sweet time of grace?

Shall I in slumber steep each weary sense,—
Weary with longing? Shall I flee away
Into past days, and with some fond pretence
Cheat myself to forget the present day?

Shall love for thee lay on my soul the sin
Of casting from me God's great gift of time?
Shall I, these mists of memory locked within,
Leave and forget life's purposes sublime?

Oh, how, or by what means, may I contrive
To bring the hour that brings thee back more near?
How shall I teach my drooping hope to live
Until that blessed time when thou art here?

I'll tell thee: for thy sake I will lay hold
Of all good aims, and consecrate to thee,
In worthy deeds, each moment that is told,
While thou, beloved one, art far from me.

For thee I will arouse my thoughts to try
All heavenward flights, all high and holy strains;
For thy dear sake I will walk patiently
Through these long hours, nor call their minutes pains.

I will this dreary blank of absence make
A noble task-time; and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to o'ertake
More good than I have won since yet I live.

So may this dooméd time build up in me
A thousand graces which shall thus be thine;
So may my love and longing hallowed be,
And thy dear thought an influence divine!

—*Frances Anne Kemble.*

GOD AS WE SEE HIM.

(A CHAPTER FROM ONE OF THE RECENT BOOKS ABOUT THE WAR.)

For some time before I was wounded, we had been in very hot places. We were occupying dug-outs which the Hun had spent two years in building, with French civilian labor. He had shown his disapproval of us by paying particular attention to our batteries; as a consequence our shell dressings were all used up. So I got on my horse one Sunday and rode into the back country to see if I couldn't pick up some at various Field Dressing Stations. I came to a cathedral city, which was and still is beautiful, despite the constant bombardments. The Huns had just finished hurling a few more tons of explosives into it as I entered. The streets were deserted. It might have been a city of the dead. Here and there we came to what looked like a barricade which barred our progress; actually it was the piled-up walls and rubbish of buildings that had collapsed.

I turned up through narrow alleys and reached the nave of a fine cathedral which was roofed only by the sky. Two years of the Huns had made it as much a ruin as Tintern Abbey. At the far end of this stretch of destruction stood the high altar, untouched by the hurricane of shell-fire. . . . Every Sabbath since the start of the war, no matter how severe the bombardment, service has been held there. The Hun is aware of this; with malice aforethought he lands shells into the cathedral every Sunday in an effort to smash the altar. So far he has failed. . . .

One finds in this a symbol,—that in the heart of the maelstrom of horror which this war has created, there is a quiet place where the lamp of gentleness and honor is kept burning. From the polluted trenches of Vimy the poppies spring up, blazoning abroad in vivid scarlet the heroism of our lads' willing sacrifice. All this April, high above the shouting of our guns, the larks sang joyously. The scarlet of the poppies, the song of the larks, the lamp shining on the altar are only external signs of the unconquerable religion which lies hidden in the hearts of our men.

There was a line from William Morris's *Earthly Paradise* which used to haunt me, especially in the early days when I was first experiencing what war really meant. It reads as follows:—

"Of heaven or hell I have no power to sing;
I cannot ease the burden of your fears
Or make quick-coming death a little thing."

It is the last line that makes me smile rather quietly. I smile because the souls who wear khaki have learned to do just that! How typical Morris is of the days before the war when people had only pinpricks to endure, and, consequently, didn't exert themselves to be brave! A big sacrifice, which bankrupts one's life, is always more bearable than the little inevitable annoyances of sickness, disappointment, and dying in a bed. It is easier for Christ to go to Calvary than for an on-looker to lose a night's sleep in the garden.

When the world went well with us before the war, we were doubters. Now, when we have thrust the world, affections, life itself behind us and gaze hourly into the eyes of Death, belief comes as simply and clearly as it did when we were children. Curious and extraordinary! The burden of our fears has slipped from our shoulders in our attempt to do something for others; the unbelievable and long-coveted miracle has happened; at last, to every soul who has grasped his chance of heroism, "quick-coming death" has become a fifth-rate calamity.

In saying this I do not mean to glorify war. War can never be anything but beastly and damnable. But there are two kinds of war. There's the kind that a highwayman wages when he pounces from the bushes and assaults a defenseless woman; there's the kind you wage when you go to her rescue. The highwayman can't expect to come out of the fight with a loftier morality,—you can. Our chaps never wanted to fight. They hate fighting; it's that hatred of the thing they are compelled to do that makes them so terrible. They entered the war to defend rather than to destroy. They literally put behind them houses, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, lands for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake,—though they would be the last to express themselves in that fashion. . . .

God as we see Him! And do we see Him? I think so, but not always consciously. He moves among us in the form of our brother men. We see Him most evidently when danger is most threatening and courage is at its highest. We don't often recognize Him out loud. Our chaps don't assert that they are His fellow-campaigners. They're too humble minded and inarticulate for that. They're where they are because they want to do their "bit,"—their duty. "Doing their bit" in Bible language means laying down their lives for their friends. After all, they're not so far from Nazareth.

When men die for something worthwhile, death loses all its terror. . . . Danger doesn't appeal; it allures. It holds a challenge. It stings one's pride. All this is inexplicable to civilians. But civilian philosophers fail to explain until we can explain them. In their world they are the centre of the universe. They look inward instead of outward. The sun rises and sets to minister to their particular happiness. We understand; a few months ago we, too, were like that. What makes us reckless of death is our intense gratitude that we have altered. In his secret heart the egotist is a self-despiser. Can you imagine what a difference it works in a man after years of self contempt, at least for one brief moment to approve of himself? Ever since we can remember we were chained to the prison

house of our bodies; we lived to feed our bodies, to clothe our bodies, to preserve our bodies, to minister to their passions. Now we know that our bodies are mere flimsy shells, in which our souls are paramount. We can fling them aside any minute. They become ignoble the moment the soul has departed. We know that the physical is not the essential part.

It is true, it isn't natural to be brave. How, then, have multitudes acquired this sudden knack of courage? They have been educated by the greatness of the occasion; when big sacrifices have been demanded, men have never been found lacking. And they have acquired it through discipline and training. When you have subjected yourself to discipline, you cease to think of yourself; *you* are not *you*, but a part of a company of men. If you don't do your duty, you throw the whole machine out. You soon learn the hard lesson that every man's life and every man's service belong to other people. Of this the organization of an army is a vivid illustration. Take the infantry, for instance. They can't fight by themselves; they're dependent on the support of the artillery. The artillery, in their turn, would be terribly crippled were it not for the gallantry of the air service. This close interdependence of service on service, division on division, battalion on battery follows right down through the army till it reaches the individual, so that each man feels that the day will be lost if he fails.

There was a time when I thought it was rather up to God to explain himself to the creatures He had fashioned; since then I've acquired the point of view of a soldier. In the army you learn to jump at an order, to forsake your own convenience at any hour of the day or night, to go forward on the most lonely and dangerous errands without complaining. You learn to feel that there is only one thing you can make out of it,—the spirit you have developed in encountering its difficulties. Your body is nothing; it can be smashed in a minute. How frail it is you never realize until you have seen men smashed. So you learn to tolerate the body, to despise death, and to place all your reliance on courage,—which, when it is found at its best, is the power to endure for the sake of others.

When we think of God, we think of Him in just about the same way that a Tommy in the front-line thinks of Sir Douglas Haig. Heaven is a kind of General Headquarters. All that the Tommy in the front-line knows of an offensive is that orders have reached him, through the appointed authorities, that at zero hour he will climb out of his trench and go over the top, to meet a reasonable chance of wounds and death. He doesn't say: "I don't know whether I will climb out. I never saw Sir Douglas Haig; there mayn't be any such person. I want to have a chat with him first. If I agree with him, I may go over the top, and then again I may not. We'll see about it."

Instead, he attributes to his Commander-in-Chief the same patriotism, love of duty and courage which he himself tries to practise. He believes that, if he and Sir Douglas Haig were to change places, Sir Douglas Haig would be quite as willing to sacrifice himself. He obeys. He doesn't question. That's the way every Tommy and officer comes to think of God,—as a Commander-in-Chief Whom he has never seen, but Whose orders he blindly carries out.

The religion of the trenches is not a religion which analyzes God with impertinent speculation. It's a religion which teaches men to carry on stoutly and to say, "I've tried to do my bit as best I know how. I guess God knows it. If I 'go west' to-day, He'll remember that I played the game. So I guess He'll forget about my sins and take me to Himself."

That is the simple religion of the trenches as I have learnt it—a religion not without glory; to carry on as bravely as you know how, and to trust God without worrying Him.—*From "The Glory of the Trenches," by Coningsby Dawson. Copyright, 1918, by John Lane Company, Publishers, New York.*

THE STILL HOUR.

THE HEAVENLY AIRS.

Work is the fresh air of the soul!
It clears the heavy brain,
Quickens the pulses of the mind,
Warms thought to action, and the blind
And sluggish will, sunk into ease
Of ineffective lethargies
It stirs to life again.

Grief is the cold air of the soul!
It chills and blights the flowers;

In urgent gusts it sways and smites,
Freezing the source of all delights;
But roots grow strong by dint of storm,
And, when the spring awakes, they form
The growth of happier hours.

Love is the warm air of the soul!
It reacheth far and wide,
Clasping all life with healing touch,
Wooing the little into much,
Making brown branch and buried root
To bud and blossom and bear fruit
Like the sweet summer-tide.

Blow, heavenly wind, on every soul!
And stir them constantly.
Sting us and quicken us and bless;
Relax not in thy urgent stress,
Till, out of toil and love and pain,
Full strength and stature we attain,
And are led home by thee.

—*Susan Coolidge.*

Religion is called dull. So it may seem to those who do not know it from the inside. To others it is the *Great Adventure*, here and hereafter, with possibilities and glories and victories beside which the flight of the aëroplane or the dive of the submarine is tame. And prayer is the key to all this.—*Walter J. Carey.*

MORNING PRAYER.

O silence, deep and strange!
The earth doth yet in quiet slumber lie.
No stir of life, save, on yon woodland range,
The tall trees bow as if their Lord passed by.

Like to one new-create,
I have no memory of grief and care.
Of all the things which vexed my soul of late
I am ashamed in this calm morning air.

This world, with all its band
Of clamorous joys and griefs, shall be to me
A bridge whereon, my pilgrim-staff in hand,
I cross the stream of Time, O Lord, to Thee!

—*J. F. Eichendorf.*

If a man cannot be great, he can yet be good in will. And what he with his whole heart and mind, love and desire, wills to be, that without doubt he most truly is. It is little we can bring to pass, but our will and desire may be large. Nay, they may grow till they lose themselves in the infinite abyss of God.—*John Tauler.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass., tel. Quincy 1140.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

NOTICE.

Please take notice that all letters for the Book Club *must be written in ink, and on one side, only, of the paper.*

OFFERS.

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 5 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass., offers the following: "Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin," Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome," Dickens' "Cricket on the Hearth," Charles Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare," Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal," Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table."

REQUESTS.

1. Mrs. C. W. Cherry, Grapeland, Texas, Route 1, Box 98, has not received any reading for over a year, and will appreciate magazines or books for herself; also suitable reading for her little girl of twelve years.

2. A friend of mine gave me a copy of *The Cheerful Letter* and I enjoyed reading it very much. I am on the sick list and should be very glad to get some good novels to read. Will some of the kind friends please send me "Iron Bound" and "The North Shore Watch"? I will read and pass them to some one else. I refer you to Rev. G. W. Tucker, Vonnoy, North Carolina, Mrs. Leva, Vonnoy, North Carolina.

3. It has been some time since I wrote to you. I come again, asking for the

"Man without a Country," by Edward Hale, and "Pioneering Where the World is Old," or any book on foreign travel. I wish to tell you my boy has returned safe from France. I shall be seventy years old the 19th of December, and I hope to be remembered on that day. Bettie A. Short, Elamsville, Virginia.

4. Mrs. C. D. Gilbert, Sandidges, Virginia, Box 34, living in a remote place, will be grateful for reading.

5. I am a poor widow with seven small children, the oldest a boy fifteen years old. My health is very bad, God calling my dear husband away from me in January, 1919. We all had influenza, which left us in bad shape. I ask that dear Cheerful Letter friends will remember me, my five little girls and two boys with books, reading of any kind, and pictures to pass the hours away. Pray God to bless us that we may not suffer. I hope some one will write to me. Mrs. Ida Austin, Route 5, Marshville, North Carolina.

6. Paul Kendall, fifteen years of age, living on a farm with his widowed mother, asks for suitable reading.

7. Mrs. Elsie Jamison, Elamsville, Virginia, is thanking all for the reading and scraps that have been sent. She lives in a thinly settled neighborhood and gets very lonely; is the mother of one child.

8. Mrs. Bill Turner, Polkton, North Carolina, mother of four small children, and living on a farm, will be glad of reading and cards.

9. Mr. E. D. Tyson, Ansonville, North Carolina, Box 252, with a wife in poor health, and four small children, will appreciate reading and cards.

10. We are so lonely, have nothing to read and are unable to buy. I hope some kind friend will remember me, my husband and little girl with some reading. We should be glad of some papers telling something of the past war. My health is poor. I was fifty-nine years old July 10. I shall be glad of any remembrance. Scraps will be highly appreciated to help pass suffering hours away. As my health is poor I can do but little. I hope some one will send my little girl picture books and light reading. Mrs. Jane Walters, Marshville, North Carolina, R. F. D. 5.

11. We are in need of books for children and girls fourteen years old. We are very anxious to get the following books: "Elsie Dinsmore," "Elsie's Holidays in Roselands," "Elsie's Girlhood," "Elsie's Children," "Fairy Tales for Children." Our library is not three years old, yet we have a circulation of four hundred books each month. This library was operated two years on donations from the business men and women of our Negro race. This library has been a blessing to this community. Mrs. Hattie B. Wooster, 501 Fayetteville Street, Durham, North Carolina.

12. This is my first letter to the Cheerful Letter Exchange. I should love to join your society. My husband and myself are getting old; I am sixty-eight and he is seventy. We both belong to the Baptist church. We have six children dead; all the others are married but one. He was taken into the Army and has just returned, and he is our dependence for a living. I should be glad of some good reading for him. I should appreciate a Bible with large print for my husband; and I should be very glad of some scraps of any kind for patchwork. For reference I send Rev. James Wyatt, Daisy, West Virginia. Address Mrs. Mary F. Massey, Ashland, West Virginia.

13. As a reader of *The Cheerful Letter* I would ask you to be kind enough to insert my name on the Request list, for magazines and books treating on "Story and Photo-Play" writing. Alphonse Blaine, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, U.S.A.

14. Please send reading matter to an old man, often afflicted with rheumatism, and shut in. His R. F. D. carrier says he is a very worthy man, and a good Christian. He lives in a remote section of the country. His name and address are: Mr. A. K. McMillan, R. F. D. 1, Ivanhoe, North Carolina. I wish to thank all who have sent me literature. Mrs. D. C. Fennell, Kerr, North Carolina.

15. I am a seventeen-year-old girl, having no sisters or brothers at home, and living in a very lonesome place. I am

very fond of reading; but cannot well afford to buy books. I shall appreciate very much any books or magazines the Cheerful Letter friends may send me. I live so far from school I cannot go very much, and shall be glad to receive anything that will help me with my studies. Mary Griffin, Sandy Ridge, Route 2, North Carolina.

16. It has been quite a long time since I wrote to you; but I have not forgotten you and the good you have done me. I have been teaching for the past year. I find it is almost impossible for some of my scholars to furnish themselves with the necessary books. If any one has any books or stories suitable for the first four grades, I should be so glad to receive them and pass them over to the children in those grades who are not able to buy them. I should also be glad to receive back numbers of the *Needle Craft Magazine*, the *Pictorial Review* and *Modern Priscilla*. (Miss) Helen Lyon, Whitakers, North Carolina.

17. I wish to thank the Cheerful Letter Club friends for the nice reading and patchwork pieces. I hope to receive more in the future. Living in a remote place I need the cheer of good reading very much. I should be very grateful to receive any reading suitable for my four little boys aged from two to ten years. Pictures and cards would be appreciated; also the following, if not asking too much: *Ladies' Home Journal, Mother's Magazine*, and *Good Housekeeping*. I shall appreciate anything sent me. Mrs. S. B. Hamner, Knoll, Virginia.

18. Mrs. J. W. Harrington, Wadesboro, North Carolina, Box 49, Route 1, a poor woman with six children (ages not given) will appreciate reading.

19. Sabbath reading is asked for by Mrs. Lou N. Turner, Dodson, Virginia.

20. I am anxious to get two copies of "Daily Strength for Daily Needs," published by Roberts Brothers, Boston, Mass. Can I get these through your book exchange? I shall greatly appreciate it if I can get help to secure these books. I want to thank all for the good magazines and papers sent; they have given me much pleasure and entertainment. I try to pass them on to others around me who do not have these pleasures. Mrs. Elva Robinson, Marion, Virginia.

21. Mrs. Fannie Singleton, Norwood, North Carolina, a shut-in, not able to work, asks for *Ladies' Home Journal* and the "Prince of the House of David."

22. Mr. Rothchild Francis, St. Thomas, Virginia Islands, U.S.A., desires to obtain a copy of Wordsworth's Poems.

23. It has been so much pleasure to me to get the little *Cheerful Letter*. May I come again and ask for something to read? I should appreciate any of the following: *McCall's Magazine, Delineator*, or *Mothers' Magazine* each month after some one has done with them. "The Life of Christ" would be gladly received; also patchwork pieces. Mrs. Covie Nance, Polkton, North Carolina, R. F. D. 3.

24. Rev. C. W. Johnson, Ben Hur, Arkansas, asks for a few up-to-date books for himself and family.

25. I am writing you concerning reading matter. I should like to have *The Cheerful Letter* and any other reading matter. I am the mother of six children, the oldest fourteen, five boys and one little girl six years old that takes a great interest in pictures and drawing. My boys are only in the fourth and fifth grade, and are very fond of reading. I should like the *Youth's Companion*. I have one little boy, nine, in the second grade; so you see they haven't had much advantage of school. We live five miles out and the children have to walk three miles to school. I see in the April number of *The Cheerful Letter* several books offered, as follows: "The Sign of the Four," by Conan Doyle; "The Squire of Sandleside," by Amelia Barr; and the Second, Third, and Fourth Readers of other States than Texas. Mrs. Earl A. Davis, Tolar, Texas, Box 50, Route 2.

26. Mrs. Cora Dotson, Dayton, Tennessee, Route 4, care of Sam Kennedy, asks for pictures for her six-year-old child.

27. As I haven't received any reading matter in over a year, I've come asking if some one will kindly send something for my little boy, aged eight years, and my

elf. We should be glad to have *Youth's Companion* and *Good Housekeeping*,—glad o get any good reading. I can't tell ou how very much I've appreciated all hat has been sent to me in the past. I'm onfined at home so much of the time and enjoy reading. I pass along all reading natter that is sent to me. Mrs. D. A. Monroe, Manchester, North Carolina.

28. As I have not postage to write all who have sent me reading matter, I wish o thank them through *The Cheerful Letter*. I enjoyed reading them, they gave me so much comfort and cheer. I have been very sad since June. I had a dear brother in the army, and he had been in France about a year. He lived to get on this side the twenty-sixth of June and died on the twenty-eighth. There were thirteen of us children and he was the first to die. I receive my *Cheerful Letter* every month. Kind greetings to all my Cheerful Letter friends; you are not strangers to me. I read all your letters and long to be able to help you, but for some reason God lets me be tied, so there seems to be little I can do for others. I am poor, and sick most of the time. I should be glad if some kind friend would send me a school dictionary and any kind of reading matter. Ornie Tyson, Ansonville, North Carolina, Box 213.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

"MOTHER-CRAFT" AS A STUDY.

Women in many different parts of our country are feeling that the young girls of to-day ought to have a better knowledge of the laws of health, and be better prepared for the duty which lies before them as the future mothers of more girls and boys. The idea is not new, but its importance has been tremendously enforced during war times, when so large a proportion of our young men were found to be far below a fair standard of physical perfection. And, in so many, many cases, the serious defects of our young men were the direct consequence of wrong training and wrong habits in certain simple details of every-day living. A boy or a girl is likely to make a good start or a bad start according to the knowledge and active interest of the mother of the family. If she knows and if she cares, even the least encouraging circumstances of family life can often be made over, to some degree; and the effect on each individual is likely to surpass all our powers of measuring or weighing.

Much is being done directly for boys. Girls are receiving still more help, because they are the ones who naturally will have the responsibility of giving wise or unwise care to the little babies of the next generation.

In Massachusetts, for example, the State Federation of Women's Clubs is backing a movement for training young girls in "Mother-craft," through an organization called the Girls' Health League. The object of the League is,—first, to teach girls how to keep well themselves, and, second, —to teach them how to take care of babies, so as to give the new-comers a good start in life.

A recent article in the Boston *Herald*, speaking of the work of the Health League in Massachusetts, says: "The plan provides for lectures and demonstrations on personal hygiene and mother-craft, for girls between the ages of ten and sixteen years. School-girls, working-girls and members of clubs like the Camp Fire Girls, are those for whom the courses are specially designed. The usual way for the League work to be introduced into a community is by way of the schools, through the local Woman's Club. The question of introducing the work into the public school curriculum itself is under consideration in several places. Outside of the schools the work of the Health League is being carried on in many playgrounds and recreation centres in the cities. In one town a member of the local Woman's Club taught classes of girls in the Junior High School, after the close of the regular school session. An additional class was made up of workers in a large factory in the same town."

An eleven-year-old Italian girl, after having a course in Mother-craft with a class using life-size dolls for models, wrote an essay about it, saying: "The Girls' Health League teaches us personal hygiene and how to care for our baby brothers and sisters. By personal hygiene we mean the systematic care for the body, by keeping the body clean within and without, by brushing the teeth, breathing pure air and living in the sunlight; by sleeping and living in well-ventilated rooms. . . . Before handling the baby, the hands should be carefully washed.

It is better to wash the baby's face before putting it into the tub." The little girl goes on to tell how she has learned to manage the bath, how to take care of milk and how to prepare it for the baby's food. She ends: "I have enjoyed the work very much. One reason is that I have learned how to take care of myself and the babies. I have learned many things that I had never even heard of before."

Miss May Bliss Dickinson of Boston has written for the League courses a little text-book called *Children Well and Happy.* She says that at present every year sees Massachusetts alone lose nearly ten thousand babies under one year of age, because of a lack of knowledge on the part of the mothers. The Girls' Health League does not attempt to handle any of the debatable matters in regard to young people's education, but confines itself to information and training in regard to things which everybody will agree are needed to make girls intelligent and efficient in looking out for little children, and in keeping themselves thoroughly well. The author of the little text-book says: "We can teach girls the sacredness of life by instructing them in personal hygiene and in the care of the home. The object is to give each girl a sound mind in a sound body and to fit her for a woman's work in the world, also to train her in the general principles of health as applied to babies."

Of course it is true that some sisters in large families naturally get a good deal of experience at home, in helping to take care of younger children. But the present unnecessarily high death rate among babies in itself proves that there is in the homes fatally imperfect knowledge of what babies need to give them the right start toward healthy development and growth. Young mothers are often helplessly ignorant about such matters; older mothers cannot teach their daughters what they do not know themselves. The movement certainly has great promise of usefulness, and experience so far shows that young girls enthusiastically enjoy the training.

The true strength of every human soul is to be dependent on as many nobler as it can discern, and to be depended upon by as many inferior as it can reach.—*John Ruskin.*

CHILDREN'S CLASSICS.

LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS.

"My poor flowers look almost dead," said little Ida. "They were so pretty yesterday, and now all the leaves hang withered. Why do they do that?" she asked the student who sat on the sofa; for she liked him very much. He knew the prettiest stories, and could cut out the most amusing pictures,—hearts, with little ladies in them who danced; flowers; and castles in which one could open the doors. He was a merry student. "Why do my flowers look so faded to-day?" she asked.

"Do you not know what is the matter with them?" said the student. "The flowers were at a ball last night, and that is why they hang their heads."

"But flowers cannot dance."

"Oh, yes," said her friend, the student; "when it grows dark and we are asleep they jump about merrily. Almost every night they have a ball."

"Where do they dance?" asked Ida.

"Have you been outside the town gate by the great castle where the king lives in summer, and where the beautiful garden is? You remember the swans in the lake that swim up to you when you give them crumbs? There are capital balls there. As soon as the king and all the court go to town, the flowers run from the garden into the castle itself and have a merry time. The two most beautiful roses seat themselves on the throne, and are king and queen. Then all the other flowers come. The blue violets are naval cadets; they dance with the hyacinths and crocuses. The tulips and the tiger lilies are old ladies who keep watch to see that the dancing is well done, and that everything goes on with propriety."

"But does not anybody know about it?" asked Ida.

"Oh, sometimes the old steward of the castle comes at night, for it is his business to watch there. He carries a great bunch of keys; but as soon as the flowers hear those keys rattle they hide behind the long curtains, and the old steward says 'I smell flowers here,' but he does not see them."

"Do you suppose I could see them?"

"You might," said the student. "Now the next time you go into your garden you must tell one of the flowers then about the balls in the king's castle; that flower will tell it to the rest, and then they will all go."

"But how can one flower tell it to another? For flowers cannot speak."

"That they cannot," agreed the student, "but they can make signs. Have you not noticed that, when the wind blows a little, the flowers nod at one another, and move their green leaves? They can understand that just as well as we can understand when we speak to one another."

Ida thought much about what the student told her of the flowers. She remembered that her own flowers that hung their heads were tired because they had danced all night; they were certainly ill. She took them to a table where many of her toys were kept; it had a whole drawer full of beautiful things. In the doll's bed lay her doll, Sophy, asleep. Ida said to her, "You really must get up, Sophy, and manage to lie in the drawer. The poor flowers are ill, and must have your bed to-night; then perhaps they will get well again."

The doll looked cross, and did not say a single word.

Ida laid the flowers in the doll's bed, pulled the little coverlet up over them, and said they were to lie still and be good; she would make them some tea, so that they might get well again, and be able to get up to-morrow. Before she went to bed herself, she went to the window where her mother's beautiful flowers stood,—and she whispered, "I know where you are going to-night!" The flowers acted as if they did not understand a word; they did not stir a leaf. But Ida knew what she knew!

When she was in bed she fell asleep, and then she woke again. It was quiet in her bedroom. "I wonder if my flowers are asleep in Sophy's bed," she thought. She raised herself in bed and looked into the next room where the moon was shining through the window. She thought she could hear somebody playing the piano, very, very softly. Then she crept quietly out of bed and went softly to the door of the room. And how splendid it was,—what she saw!

The hyacinths and tulips from her mother's window were standing in the middle of the room; only their empty flower-pots were left at the window. A tall yellow lily sat at the piano, playing. The flowers began to dance very gracefully, holding each other by their long, green leaves as they swung around. A great blue crocus hopped to the doll's bed where the sick flowers lay, and they got up directly and nodded to the others to say that they wished to dance, too.

All at once there was a loud knocking at the table drawer where Sophy lay with the other toys; an old, broken doll ran to open the drawer, and Sophy raised herself, looking quite astonished. "There must be a ball here," said Sophy. "Why did nobody tell me about it?" And she fell down to the floor with a great noise. The flowers came running up to ask if she had hurt herself, and they were all very polite to her, especially the flowers that had lain in her bed. She had really not hurt herself at all, and said they might keep her bed,—she did not mind sleeping in the drawer.

Then in through the door came a great number of splendid flowers; two magnificent roses wore golden crowns,—they were a king and queen. There were musicians, too. Great poppies and peonies blew upon pea-pods till they were quite red in the face. Blue hyacinths and little white snowdrops rang just as if they had bells. It was wonderful music! Then came many other flowers and danced together,—violets and primroses, daisies and lilies-of-the-valley. It was beautiful to look at!

At last the flowers wished one another good-night. Then little Ida, too, crept back to bed, where she dreamed of all that she had seen.

When she rose, next morning, she went to the table to see if the sick flowers were in bed. There they were, but quite faded, even more than yesterday. Sophy was lying in the table drawer looking dreadfully sleepy. And she never afterwards would say one word about the ball or how the flowers danced with her!—*Hans Christian Andersen.*

NATURAL HISTORY.

A HORSE'S APPEAL.

Every lover of horses will be interested in the following appeal that the Boston *Sunday Post* recently printed. It originated in France and came to this country through an American lieutenant who received a copy of it from a French artillery officer:—

"To thee, my master, I offer my prayer.

"Treat me as a human being, not as a machine. Feed me, water and care for me, and, when the day's work is done,

groom me carefully; for, remember, a good grooming is equivalent to half a feed. Clean my feet and legs, and keep them in good condition, for they are the most important parts of my body.

"Pet me sometimes. Be always gentle to me, so that I may serve you the more gladly, and learn to love you.

"Do not jerk the reins. Do not whip me when I am going uphill. Do not force me out of my regular gait, or you will not have my regular strength when you want it. Never strike, beat or kick me when I do not understand what you mean; but give me a chance to understand you. Watch me; and if I fail to do your bidding, see if something is not wrong with my harness or feet.

"Don't draw the straps too tight; give me freedom to move my head. Don't make my load too heavy, and, oh, I pray thee, have me shod every month.

"Examine my teeth when I do not eat. I may have some teeth too long, or I may have an ulcerated tooth, and that, you know, is very painful. Do not tie my head in an unnatural position, or take away my best defense against flies and mosquitoes by cutting off my tail.

"I cannot, alas! tell you when I am thirsty; so give me pure, cold water frequently. Do all you can to protect me from the sun, and throw a cover over me—not when I am working, but when I am standing in the cold.

"I always try to do cheerfully the work you require of me, and day or night I stand for hours patiently waiting for you. Therefore, oh, my master, treat me in the kindest way!"

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, 238 Willow Avenue, West Somerville, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

A SQUARE.

1. A famous general.
2. One of the States of the American Union.
3. A shoot of a tree, for grafting.
4. A stone of fine grit used for sharpening.

II.

JUMBLED FLOWERS.

1. Dmlaorgi.
2. Tubercupt.
3. Heolnkecyus.
4. Liewstamweil.
5. Tianroacn.

—*Selected.*

III.

A ZIGZAD

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All the words contain the same number of letters, and, when rightly guessed and written one below the other, the path marked by the stars will spell the name of a subject of much discussion at the present time.

1. Sluggish.
2. A precious stone of any kind.
3. A girl's name.
4. A Latin pronoun.
5. The act of employing anything.
6. A number.
7. A number.
8. A synonym for behind.
9. An article used in fishing.
10. An adverb.
11. A preposition.
12. To strike with some degree of force.
13. An adverb.
14. A number.
15. The possessive case singular of the personal pronoun he.

Answers to Sherlock Holmes Examination in the July-August Number.

1. Apparently in St. Bartholomew's Hospital. (See "A Study in Scarlet.")
2. Living on a small farm on the Downs, five miles from Eastbourne. He is

well, although occasionally attacked by rheumatism (doubtless due to his life in a cave on Dartmoor, while after the Hound of the Baskervilles). He is engaged in agriculture, bee-keeping, and the study of philosophy. (See prefatory note to "His Last Bow.")

3. "The Adventure of the Second Stain."

4. That while he had an erratic knowledge of chemistry, geology, law, and music, and a profound acquaintance with criminal history, he was totally ignorant of many other branches of knowledge; for instance, literature and astronomy. He had never heard of Carlyle, and did not know that the earth went round the sun. (See "A Study in Scarlet.")

5. No. Either Holmes was fooling Watson or else he bought the "five-foot shelf" and took to reading on an extended plan. He cultivated a fine taste in literature: he quotes Hafiz ("A Case of Identity"), he carries a pocket Petrarch to read on the train ("The Boscombe Valley Mystery"), he wishes to talk about George Meredith (same story), and he quotes Flaubert ("The Red-headed League"). As for astronomy, he discusses with Watson "the causes of the change in the obliquity of the ecliptic" ("The Greek Interpreter"), which certainly sounds like astronomy to me.

6. He spent two years at a college not named. (See "The 'Gloria Scott.' ") The type of men with him there suggests Oxford.

7. By no means. His creator seems to have adopted and exaggerated the public impression of him. Finally, Holmes is allowed ruthlessly to insult Watson and adopt the manner of Johnson to Boswell. (See "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax.")

8. In "The Lost Special" (as "an amateur reasoner of some celebrity at that date") and in "The Man with the Watches" (as "a well-known criminal investigator"). both stories appearing in "Round the Fire Stories." The language and methods of Holmes are unmistakable.

9. About thirty-two. Ten of them are: "The Adventure of the Paradol Chamber"; "The Amateur Mendicant Society"; "The Singular Adventures of the Grice Patersons in the Island of 'Uffa' "; "The Tarleton Murders"; "The Singular Affair of the Aluminum Crutch"; "Ricoletti of the Club Foot and his Abominable Wife"; "The Investigation of the Sudden Death of Cardinal Tosca"; "The Arrest of Wilson the Notorious Canary-trainer"; "The Repulsive Story of the Red Leech and the Terrible Death of Crosby the Banker"; "The Addleton Tragedy and the Singular Contests of the Ancient British Barrow."

10. "The Musgrave Ritual."

11. "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot."

12. "A Study in Scarlet"; "The Noble Bachelor"; "The Dancing Men"; "The Valley of Fear."

13. Cigars in coal-scuttle; tobacco in toe of a Persian slipper. (See "The Musgrave Ritual.")

14. Morstan. (See "The Sign of Four.")

15. Three years. Travelling in Tibet, Persia, Arabia, the Sudan, and working in a laboratory in Southern France. (See "The Empty House.")

16. His ancestors "were country squires, who appear to have led much the same life as is natural to their class"; but his grandmother was "the sister of Vernet, the French artist," and he thought that the influence of "art in the blood . . . liable to take the strangest forms" led to his peculiar abilities. (See "The Greek Interpreter.")

17. (*a*) Audited the books in some of the government departments. (See "The Greek Interpreter.") But later he seems to have risen to much greater importance as a sort of consultant on general information for the Government. (See "The Bruce Partington Plans.")

(*b*) "The Diogenes in Pall Mall."

18. A suggestion from old Mr. Trevor, J.P., in "The 'Gloria Scott.' "

19. Three murder cases: "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box"; "The Five Oranges Pips"; "The Resident Patient." Three robbery cases: "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle"; "The Naval Treaty"; "The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet." Three other crimes: "His Last Bow"; "Silver Blaze"; "The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb." Three cases without crime: "The Yellow Face"; "The Man with the Twisted Lip"; "A Case of Identity."

Wherever thou art, thou canst, through God's incomprehensible mercy, in a moment bring thyself into the midst of God's holy Church Invisible, and receive secretly that aid, the very thought of which is a present, sensible blessing. Art thou afflicted? Thou canst pray. Art thou merry? Thou canst sing psalms. Art

thou lonely,—does the day run heavily? Fall on thy knees, and thy thoughts are relieved by the idea and by the reality of thy unseen companions. Art thou tempted to sin? Think steadily of those who perchance witness thy doings from God's secret dwelling-place. Art thou slandered? Thou hast the praise of angels. Art thou under trial? Thou hast their sympathy.—*John Henry Newman.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

Chairman of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass. The next meeting will be October 3, 1919.

Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Mrs. Francis Hastings, Kendal Green, Mass.

Editor of The Cheerful Letter, Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 5 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or similar article is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of *The Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

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